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ABSTRACT

The inferior position assigned to Asian women jeopardizes not only their future status in society, but also the future of society itself. The major problems standing in the way of empowerment for women are individual and family related, community, sociopolitical, cultural, and economic. Centralized planning of literacy/civic education programs in the Asia Pacific region means that area-specific and need-specific programs for women are rarely implemented. Analyses of literacy/post-literacy materials in Asia and the Pacific have shown that the contents consist mainly of matters related to the stereotype of the traditional role of women in society. Strategies to achieve empowerment for women through education should include community participation, universalization of elementary education for girls, teacher development, decentralized planning, continuing education, international cooperation, income-generating projects, and organization. Special attention should also be paid to continuously revisable planning, more innovative materials and delivery methods, monitoring and evaluation, and support systems for women's projects. (Appendixes include a chart that correlates problems with proposed activities and agencies and 21 references are attached.) (YLB)

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FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND CIVIC EDUCATION AMONG RURAL WOMEN

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FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AND CIVIC EDUCATION AMONG RURAL WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

Implementing Unesco's Sub-Programme II.4.2 Promotion of General Access to Education for Girls and Women, Unesco Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (PROAP) has undertaken various activities to enhance the functional literacy and civic awareness of women and girls.

In 1985, the State Government of India, through the State Government of Uttar Pradesh, launched an Integrated Pilot Project in Functional Literacy and Civic Awareness among Rural Women in the two blocks of Chinhat and Bakshi-ka-Talab. Through this Project more than 30,000 women and girls were trained in literacy and numeracy skills, income generating skills and civic education. In addition, 300 instructors, most of whom were local women, were trained to run non-formal education centres for young girls as well as adult education centres for women.

In the same year, Unesco organized Technical Working Group Meeting for the Improvement of Worker's Education, particularly for women workers in slums and construction sites. During the two years that followed, national follow-up activities were under way. Notable among these are the training of full-cycle of planning and management of income-generating skills in the Samsen slum, Thailand, and the development of a non-formal education curriculum for women in distress, women prisoners, women in retention homes, and prostitutes, in Sri Lanka.

Simultaneously, national activities promoting literacy/ civic education are being supported by Unesco in several countries in the region. Areas of involvement include development of reading materials for readers with limited reading skills and training of personnel.

In early October, 1987, PROAP organized an Inter-country Writing Workshop in Bandung, Indonesia. During that Workshop, materials on civic education for women were examined and guidelines for materials development suggested. Through the analysis of the materials, there has been better understanding of how to provide civic awarenesss education for women.

Unesco PROAP organized a Regional Seminar on Functional Literacy and Civic Education from 27 October - 3 November, 1987 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. Representatives from eleven Member States of Unesco participated in the Seminar which was hosted by the Literacy House, Lucknow, Directorate of Adult Education, Uttar Pradesh, and the Directorate of Adult Education, Government of India.

During the Seminar, participants critically analyzed important issues in promoting education of women in general, and of civic education, in particular. The participants developed a tentative plan of action for provision of relevant civic education for rural women.

In addition, the participants had a first-hand exposure to the Integrated Pilot Project on Functional Literacy and Civic Education in Chinhat and Bakshi-ka-Talab by visiting four villages where the Project was being implemented.

The present report is based on the experiences gained during the Workshop.

Part I

THE SITUATION OF ASIAN WOMEN

To operationalize the concept and strategy of "empowerment", it is necessary to place empowerment in the context of the harsh realities many women are living in. From this context, specifications that lead to actions that may nurture empowerment can be drawn.

Thus a brief sketch of the situation of women is a necessary backdrop to deliberations on development of concrete and effective actions for empowerment.

The inferior position assigned to women jeopardizes not only their future status in society, but also the future of society itself.

- *Women, who represent half of the world's population,do two-thirds of the work, but receive only one-tenth of the total income.*
- *Rural women, who contribute to at least 50 per cent of food production, receive little or no agricultural training of any kind.*
- *Their working day is always longer than that of men: from 15 to 19 hours a day. In addition to looking after the children, they do the housework, fetch firewood, carry water, prepare meals and perform the long and tiring tasks of hoeing, planting and bringing in the harvest.*
- *In most regions of the world, maternal mortality rates are still high. Women suffer from chronic malnutrition, and two-thirds of them are anemic. Without any kind of sex education, their health is undermined by frequent unspaced pregnancies.*
- *Ignorance of a more balanced diet, to family planning, to hygiene in the home, and to other ways of improving family health and the quality of life, is partly a result of illiteracy.*

In the 1980s illiteracy remains a major impediment to the development and wellbeing of women in this region. The gravity of the situation becomes apparent if we consider that nearly 63.2 per cent of the world's illiterate woman population lives in this region (Unesco Office of Statistics, 1981). Curiously, the impediments to women becoming literate are essentially similar all across the region, even though the women are geographically separated over thousands of miles.

The most striking feature of women's place in various societies in the region is the fact that despite constitutional and statutory provisions, in most countries the status accorded to women is still not equal to that of men. The investigations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI), 1975, highlighted that Indian women continue to be victims of a process of economic, social, cultural and political marginalization. Women are viewed as homemakers and are not encouraged to undertake professions to which men have natural access. Although a number of women are employed in the organized and unorganized sectors, policy makers and planners have failed to consciously promote the non-traditional role of women in society. The failure to strengthen women's productive and

economic role has not only accentuated the inequality and exploitation, but has also limited employment opportunities for women.

There are disturbing indicators of increasing devaluation of women in this region, like the declining sex ratio in the work force; growing gender disparity in life expectancy, deathrates, literacy and migration rates, and accelerating social evils like dowry, trafficking of women and crimes of violence against women.

In various religions, women's secondary position is not always acknowledged. Traditions and customs inhibit them from gaining equality. Various kinds of revivalist movements and cultural conservatism uphold and perpetuate patriarchal values in the societies. Recent experiences in India and neighbouring countries indicate revival of such attitudes amongst certain political groups which use religion and culture as instruments to perpetuate these values. Progressive values and change are resisted by some of these deeply entrenched cultural and traditional groups. The report of the non-government organizations on consultation reviewing the achievements of the Women's Decade in India, (Delhi, April 1983) drew attention to this problem.

Tradition is still very strong among many women of Afghanistan, who keep covering themselves with the now officially abolished "chadri" or heavy veil.

UNICEF (Satyan/77)

Poverty remains a major obstacle to women's access to education in the Region. A homeless woman and children living in dire poverty.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

In most of the countries of this region, women's life expectancy continues to be lower than that of men. Lack of leisure and mass poverty have turned a large proportion of women into drudges. Deforestation and other forms of ecological degradation have increased women's work burden. Unrestricted pregnancy continues to impose obstructions to women's health, education, training, employment and effective political participation. The population question represents a major part of the constraints on the development of women.

The majority of women in the developing world live in rural areas where agriculture is a major occupation. Women play a substantial role in agricultural production, and in cottage and household industries. A large number actively participate in the unorganized sector of industry. Statistics show that 50 per cent of food crops in the world are produced by women. *A Survey of Problems and Needs of Rural Women* (1978) indicates that 90 per cent of the sample population consider farming their primary activity, and that 1/3 of women (and men) work more than 60 hours per week. Women's equal participation in world food production is in extreme contrast with their ownership of land. Indeed, women own hardly any land at all: one per cent of all the world's land is owned by women. If and when they do own land, they often end up losing it through marriage or inheritance laws. Most women work on their husband's land, helping them grow the crops. For the most part, they do not receive half of the sale of the crops. Pongsapich (1986) quotes Thailand's Labour Department which states that in 1967, 86.7 per cent of rural Thai women were engaged in unpaid agricultural work for their families. The situation is worse in the cases where women work on someone else's land. Evidence has shown that banks have been unwilling to give loans to women who own no land since they have no credit.

While half of the world's food is produced by women working in the fields of their male relatives, women constitute 1/3 of the world's labour force. As wage earners, their pay is low compared to their male counterparts performing the same tasks. They have long and erratic working hours and poor working conditions. Their

80 per cent of Vietnamese women are engaged in farming but training for women rarely includes new agricultural proctices.

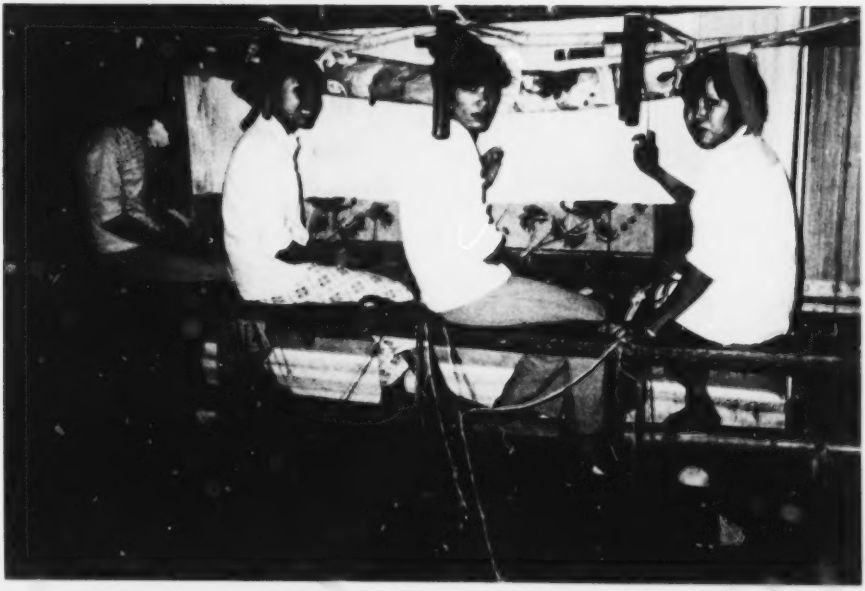
Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

work is undervalued and considered a "subsidiary activity" since their real functions are considered to be those of homemakers and mothers. Their income is only to supplement that of their husband's and, therefore, may be negligible. As long as women feel they can depend on their husband or consider wage earning an occasional subsidiary income, they are satisfied with their low wages. (Pongsapich, 1986).

Women sell fast food to earn income in the streets of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

Cultural and social factors also encourage such conditions to be maintained. In some communities, women are discouraged from seeking employment outside their home. Hence, no alternatives are open to them except to work as home-based workers. Their bargaining power is, therefore, nil. Furthermore, women themselves may not be aware of their own workers' identity viewing their work more as a "hobby". Singh and Viitenen (1987) discuss this issue and further elaborate that women may not want to acknowledge their worker's identity for fear of being seen as a competitor of their husbands.



Young women are employed in carpet factories outside Hai Phong, Viet Nam

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

In India nearly 54 per cent of rural women and 20 per cent of urban women supplement their incomes with marginal occupations like collection of fire-wood and cow-dung, fishing, tailoring, weaving, etc. (India Seventh Plan, 1985). In addition to these, on average rural women spend 10 to 12 hours every day doing household chores including preparation of food, fetching of fuel, and fodder. Yet there is a certain common feature relevant to the contribution of women throughout the rural countryside -- women tend to remain invisible. The unpaid economic activities of women and their contribution through domestic and child rearing activities are not reported in any census and are not valued in national income accounting. Industrialization and technological change have displaced millions of women from their traditional sources of livelihood, without offering adequate alternatives.

The influx of newly introduced modern technology tends to have an adverse effect on women. (Wells and Foo 1987). Women living in the suburb of Jaipur, for example, have been engaged in the home-based work of punching holes in tiny garnets for necklaces for low wages for generations. The recent introduction of hole punching machines has rendered their function unnecessary and hence considerably reduced their bargaining power which, in turn, results in further lowered wages. Another example is given of how rice mills replaced poor rural women whose only source of earning was husking with *dhenki*. Similarly, it is estimated that 125 million working days of women were lost by the switch to machine-powered rubber hullers in Java. In financial terms, this loss in labourers'

Time consuming chores such as fetching water is done almost exclusively by women and girls.

Women spend hours doing household chores and have little time left for themselves.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

earnings was approximately US$ 50 million per year in Java, alone. The amount of work now taken over by the new technology could have provided income for one million women every day for four months each year.

Country experiences in Bangladesh, the Philippines, Malaysia and Thailand have also shown that industrialization and technological changes have displaced millions of women from their traditional sources of livelihood without offering adequate alternatives.

Despite women's contribution to the well-being of their families, their community and ultimately their countries' development, several studies find that, by and large, women remain on the periphery of development plans. Pongsapich (1986) verifies that women did not feature in Thailand's national socio-economic development plan until the third cycle. That was only due to the emphasis on family planning and social welfare. Even then, involvement of women was largely on a welfare basis and not through a participatory approach.

Not only are women adversely affected by development, they are not seriously considered at the implementing stage of development. Despite the immense role women play in agriculture, they are not taken into account in agricultural education or training and extension services. While male farmers benefit from new knowledge and technology and improved agricultural practices, women rarely have access to this information. If and when they do, the messages are received second hand.

In spite of the multiple dimensions of women's handicaps, curiously, evaluation studies conducted by seven reputed Institutes of Social Science in India have shown that women's ability to learn, and enthusiasm for learning is high. Even after back-breaking long working hours, they come to the literacy centres with their children and participate effectively. Women are increasingly becoming conscious of their multiple deprivation and massive gender inequalities.

Women's interest in learning is high. In the Unesco supported project, in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, women come to class with their children.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

The World Plan of Action for the Women's decade 1975-85 drew attention to the fact that "as long as women remain illiterate and are subject to discrimination in education and training, the motivation for change so badly needed to improve the quality of life will fail for in most societies since it is the mother who is responsible for the training of her children during their formative years."

In other words, education must provide women - indeed, all oppressed and exploited groups - the means to move from passive acceptance to active self-determination. It is envisaged that only if education becomes empowering will women be able to participate fully in the social, economic and political processes which affect their lives, and be able to take control of them.

Rural women generally have little or no formal schooling. Hence, they are deprived of the usual channel for civic education which is an inherent part of formal schooling. Their need for civic education, however, has been more pronounced in recent years due to rapid changes in the compositions of regional societies. The male urban migration for paid employment, for example, has exacerbated the situation. A great number of rural households are now led by women (Unesco 1985). These women are forced out of necessity to assume several roles and functions which were otherwise considered out of the realm of women's responsibilities, e.g., tax paying, reporting births, deaths, etc. They suddenly find themselves unequipped to cope with the various responsibilities thrust upon them. Lacking knowledge, experience, and worse, confidence, these women fare poorly in their new roles and end up with undue problems and/or exploitation.

There is thus clearly an urgent need to provide civic education to this special group of women.

It has been assesed that the major problems standing in the way of empowerment for women in Asia may be categorized into the following four categories which often overlap and are interlinked.

The first is *individual and family-related problems,* which include women's inadequate knowledge on matters related to health and family life, which results in early marriage, unwanted pregnancies and unsanitary conditions in the home and its surroundings. Illiteracy also fits in this category, as do women's burden of long and hard work, women's traditional role as home-maker and child-rearer, lack of

decision-making in the home and, not infrequently, physical abuse, and abandonment in the home.

The second category is *community-level problems*, which encompasses issues like broad socio-cultural and religious resistance to women's development and vested interest groups and religious traditions that inhibit any female participation in important activities. A key community-level problem is the lack of any organized efforts among women to aid their development. Women are unorganized, fragmented, and do not participate in a sufficient number of community projects to strengthen their cause.

Socio-political and cultural problems was identified as the third category. Women are unaware of laws, programmes and facilities that can help them, and are unaware of their fundamental rights. Laws are unavailable in simple language that ordinary women can understand. Women cannot defend themselves and consequently, they are exploited. In most cases, too, existing laws protecting women are not enforced, or justice is slow and too costly. Meanwhile, another distorted images of women projected in the media present another problem which reinforces the traditional views of women as inferrior.

The fourth category is the *economic problems* faced by women every day. Poverty, of course, is one of the most important problems limiting women's control over their own life. Being economically dependent on others forces women to accept the status-quo instead of enabling them to feel the sense of achievement, self-reliance, and self-esteem which may lead them to question the way things are.

Part II

CIVIC EDUCATION AMONG RURAL WOMEN: A REGIONAL OVERVIEW

With the growing appreciation of literacy as a pre-requisite to development, adult literacy programmes have been developed in most parts of Asia. The planning of literacy-cum-civic education programmes is mostly centralized in the region, therefore area-specific and need-specific programmes for women are rarely implemented (except for programmes run by NGO's). A natural corollary is that the curriculum seems irrelevant to certain women and there is very little flexibility at the grass-roots level to change or modify the project pattern according to the needs of the learners. Consequently, the plans tend to miss key areas of women's interest, which often spells the end for the programmes. Studies have shown, for example, that a large percentage of women farmers prefer learning about new farming techniques rather than handicrafts. Furthermore, great stress is laid on the 'quantity' or targets of the programme rather than 'quality' and 'adequacy'. Plans are generally made to cover long spans of time without any in-built mechanisms for taking corrective measures or even changes of direction when necessary.

Certain elements of adult literacy programmes, however, have been prepared to meet basic needs of women, such as health and nutrition. In recent years, some literacy programmes have ventured to include information that might be categorized as civic, e.g., marriage and divorce laws, love for one's country, reforestation, building up self-reliance and self-esteem, available public and social services among others. By including elements of civic awareness in literacy or post-literacy programmes, the different agencies concerned are, at least, latently recognizing the need to raise civic awareness among rural semi-literate or illiterate women. Consequently, a growing number of materials on civic education are being developed for rural women.

Some common elements in conventional civic curricula are:

- constitution;
- citizenship;
- sense of community concerns;
- socio-economic life;
- introduction to political life in the country;
- introduction to international relations;
- introduction to international and national actions to improve the status of women; etc

Civic education is generally carried out through the formal education system. Although it is not exclusive to formal education, formal educational institutions, i.e. schools, are the only places through which civic education is systematically channeled on a national scale in most countries.

Indeed, it has been an integral part of the curriculum. A survey of the provision of civic education in five Unesco Member States indicates that while some countries emphasise a "narrow" definition of "civics" the contents of which are, for example, citizenship, duties and responsibilities, others have shifted to focus on issues that are more closely related to everyday life of the individual. This "new" approach in civic education is discussed below.

> *Civic education seems more and more to have been concerned with social change and the practical problems of daily life. This is not to say that the goal of preparing ... people for their role as ... citizens, which is a constant of civic education has changed. The approach to it, however, has changed.*
>
> *Moral and philosophic imperatives, long a staple of civic education in many countries, seem to be yielding to a teaching based more on the daily concerns and interests of people, on study of the milieu in which they are growing up and on the current and future needs of society. There is what might be called a new pragmatism in civic education.*

In the "Unesco Inter-country Writing Workshop" held in Bandung, Indonesia in 1987, in which four countries from Asia and the Pacific participated, this kind of widening of civic education was noted. The topics of the analyzed materials on civic education for women in the Workshop can be categorized as follows:

- citizen's rights and responsibilities
- health and nutrition
- family planning
- employment and work-related issues
- women's integrity, rights and self worth
- other topics of current social concerns such as deforestation and conservation of the environment.

In the Asia/Pacific region, there are a number of new programmes of civic education for women that give a great deal of coverage to these important daily realities. These realities vary from country to country, for example in Australia topics include harassment in work places and sexually transmitted diseases, while in Bangladesh they include oral rehydration, marriage, divorce and property laws for Muslim and Hindu women.

In Vietnam, the educational authorities in Thai Binh province, where women make up the majority of the workforce as farmers and labourers, have since 1984 issued a textbook for cooperative farmers. Contents of this book include non-traditional information such as how to build "an enlightened family", and "parental education".

In China, women are encouraged to learn with the programme of "sisters with a thousand yuan", whereby literacy, study of science and technology and practical skills are encouraged. The experiences of eight women who became well-off after studying science and technology were widely disseminated as role models. Consequently, an upsurge in learning and practical techniques was seen in the Chinese countryside just two years after the start of the programme. The

development of commodity production and literacy are two ready results: 96.6 per cent of all women who were active in the programme are no longer illiterate, and in addition, important psychological results such as increased self-respect and self-confidence are evident.

"Lai Meixin from Hunan Province, China has learned how to use chemical fertilizer after studying in a local school. The annual output of the field per hectare has increased remarkably after using new methods.

Hunan Women's Association, Hunan, China

Vegetable growing, one of women's household chores. Shown here is a garden in Hai Hung Province, Viet Nam.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

Women in Henan province, China, bundled up in their winter clothes regularly attend literacy classes where they learn new farming technology.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

In Malaysia, the Ministry of National and Rural Development has been overseeing a functional skills training programme for women and youth, imparting skills in tailoring, embroidery and handicrafts. After 1985, the training programmes became production centers operating five days a week. Some participants underwent skills training and "awareness raising" courses in Kuala Lumpur in 1985-86, after which they had to sit for a test. In 1987, 60 newly qualified "teachers" were selected to train other trainers in practical and teaching techniques. Thereafter, the teachers each had to organize a production centre themselves, with a grant from the government for machines and workshops. These programmes are set up in rural areas as part of a national effort to discourage female (and male) migration to urban centres. The projects seem to be able to contribute to local community development and have shown positive economic, social and cultural outcomes. After six months of training, participants generally received a steady income of M$250-300 (an equivalent of US$125-150) a month.

In Bangladesh, a programme called Grameen Bank is making significant contributions towards civic awareness of rural women. The Grameen Bank gives small loans to poor rural men and women without collateral so that they can begin income-raising activities. The main purpose is to save the rural poor from the clutches of money-lenders and middle-men.

Women's participation in the Grameen Bank has risen from 31 per cent in 1981 to 79 per cent in 1987.

In order to get a loan, five like-minded villagers of the same social status have to form a group. All have to learn 16 vows related to improving their standard of living, raising their aspirations etc. The loanee women undertake various activities, the most popular being raising milk cows, rice husking and beef and goat fattening.

A recent study show that women who obtain loans have 42 per cent more income than the other women. They have fewer pregnancies and higher aspirations for children's education. They have better health habits, 76 per cent drink tube-well

water, and 92.5 per cent can prepare oral saline. A striking change is seen in their personality. Unlike timid rural women they now value themselves as individuals, they accept and discharge responsibility as group leaders, and centre chiefs. Two formerly destitute women are now serving on the Board of Directors of the Bank.

The experience of the Grameen Bank has shown that if poor rural women are freed from exploitation they can stand on their own feet and can build up a better future for themselves and their children.

The most famous example of special attention to women's and girls' education is the Pilot Project Education for Rural Development also known as the *Cheli-beti* project, in Nepal. *Cheli-beti* means young girl and the project is aimed at improving girls' enrolment.

The project, started in 1982 with the assistance of Unesco, has the following objectives:

- to raise the status of girls and women by heightening their awareness level,
- to raise the living standards of rural women by emphasizing essential aspects such as health, sanitation, afforestation, vegetable gardening, fruit growing, etc.
- to help increase the participation of women in social, economic and political activities,
- to motivate girls to attend school after the end of the course by preparing them for school.

In its initial stage, a detailed area survey was carried out to identify the needs of the women in the villages. It was found that virtually no girls go to school and among those who do, most drop out in grade 1 or 2. It is a common belief among the girls that schooling is for boys only.

It was also noticed that although women bear the lion's share of household work, they are indifferent to the developmental activities in the village communities. In addition, an early child marriage is a common phenomenon which has had an effect on universalization of primary education.

A detailed functional literacy programme was developed on the basis of the findings mentioned above, with development of suitable courses, selection and training of female trainees and the supply of materials for conducting the classes.

An evaluation study of the pilot project in 1986 showed that about two thirds of the enrolled participants were attending the classes regularly. The project had succeeded in developing its own curriculum by incorporating development messages based on local conditions and practices. It was also noted that the pilot project created widespread public interest.

In the district of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, the most heavily populated state of India, more than 30,000 women and girls have been made functionally literate by learning some economically viable skills and raising their civic and social awareness. Initiated as a pilot project, with technical and financial assistance from Unesco, the project is being expanded to cover the entire state of Uttar Pradesh by the Uttar Pradesh Government. In absolute terms, this project will reach millions of illiterate girls and women of Uttar Pradesh. (The detailed description of

this project is given in *Simultaneous Education for Women and Girls* (Unesco 1989)

The project was designed to cope with the social constraints on girls and women that hinder their access to education. Through this project, 300 female instructors were trained to teach, at different times of the day, adult women and young girls. In villages where formal schools do not exist, the women and girls enjoy the opportunity to read and write, to learn some basic skills or to enhance the local traditional skills for increased incomes. They also have an opportunity to discuss among themselves problems and issues most crucial to them. Issues such as dowry, purdah, and problems with mothers-in-law are discussed. Often, ways and means of coping with such problems are also explored. The women, then, emerged feeling more socially aware and more confident in expressing themselves and coping with everyday problems.

The double approach of training one person to teach both children and adults seems to be a viable alternative in remote countries of the region where educated women to serve as instructors are scarce. The approach is based on optimizing existing human resources. It has been adapted by the National Literacy Mission for use in other states of India.

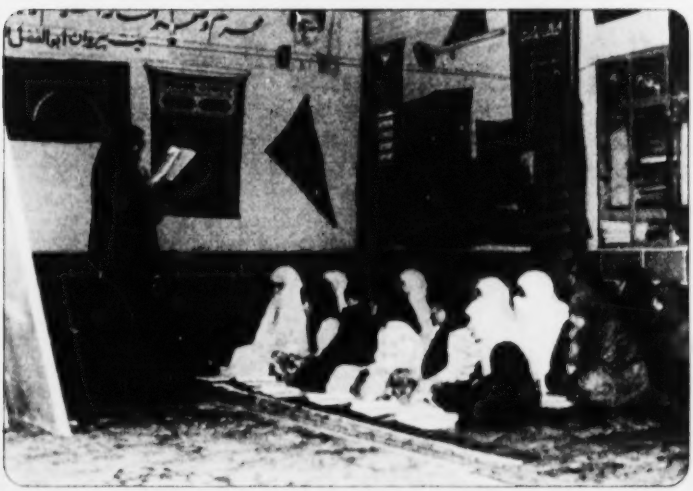
Despite such examples of projects on functional literacy and awareness raising among rural women in various countries in the Region, these projects remained isolated cases. It is accepted that the overall aim of civic education is to inform people of the functions they are called upon to fulfill as citizens, workers and people capable of governing themselves. Civic education should also endeavour to make women fully aware of their constitutional rights, and how to exercise them, as well as the importance of their contribution to family, societal and national life in all aspects. Most of the women's education programmes in the region do not emphasise the need to raise women's civic and social awareness. A review of various non-formal education programmes reveals that the traditional role of women as strictly homemaker is perpetuated in the curricula, materials and in teaching methods.

The increasing number of educational programmes in the region, however, may be interpreted to mean that women increasingly want to *control their destiny*. In concrete terms this means educating and training women through civic education to enable them to think critically, to question and analyze their own conditions and to acquire the information and skills necessary to alter these conditions. This naturally means that each woman eventually will decide her own personal matters, like choosing a life partner, number of children, business investments, her social matters (women's status in society, organizing against social evils like dowry, exploitation, etc.) and political matters (voting, participation in the local self-government, and at policy-making levels).

Increasing civic awareness of rural women is not an easy task in Asia and the Pacific, where 60 per cent of the 666 million illiterates are women. Almost automatically, any programme of raising awareness runs into an inevitable illiteracy obstacle. Illiteracy limits the degree to which women might be exposed to relevant and useful information. It is most likely to greatly hamper their power of verbal communication and hence prevent their active participation in awareness raising activities. Even if women could understand certain concepts, they lack access to further information.

A literacy class for adult women in Iran

Iranian National Commission for Unesco



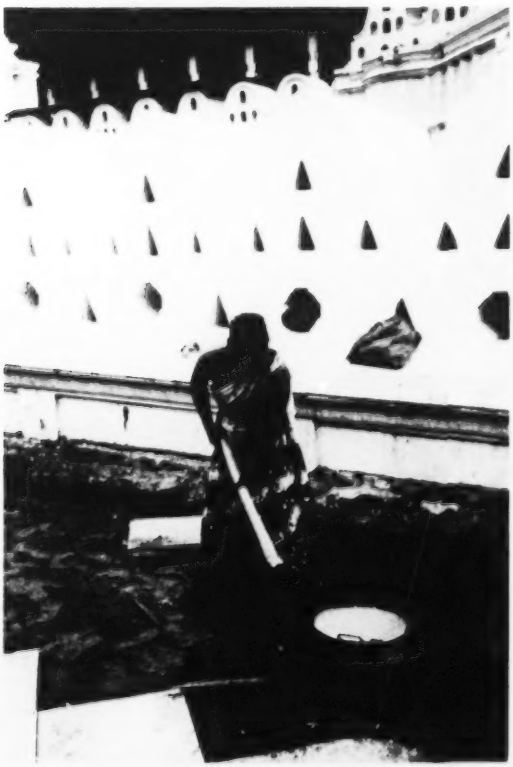
Literacy classes for young girls

Iranian National Commission for Unesco

In countries where there *are* established educational programmes for women, on the other hand, there is often another problem. A significant characteristic of these programmes has been the single pre-occupation with literacy. Several evaluation studies have pointed this out, for example *Technology Mission*, 1987. Despite statements outlining broad-based concepts of adult education, undue emphasis tends to be given to imparting literacy skills to women. For the illiterate adults, the adult education centre is frequently where one learns "only to read and write". Consequently, women are unwilling to come to the adult education centre in the first place. Comments commonly heard are: "Why do we want to waste our time?", "I am not looking for a job", "Why don't you teach my children?... they will benefit more than me".

Despite the overwhelming need for literacy, women's education clearly needs to encompass also critical skills that will help women improve their lives to a significant extent. This is because literacy is neither a felt need of the poor, nor is it perceived by poor women to be an urgent skill for a better life.

In addition, women, particularly those belonging to the lowest socio-economic strata, do not have the time to come to the adult education centre. Between cleaning and cooking, collecting fodder and firewood, tending the cattle and nursing the children and working as a labourer, there is hardly any time left for herself. So, if the chances of her coming to the adult education centre are slim in the first instance, the possibility of her dropping out or coming to the centre irregularly because of various family pressures and constraints, are even greater.



Although women are engaged in such activities as construction, they rarely receive training in the area. A woman construction worker outside the wall of the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy, Sri Lanka.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

The contents of most literacy primers do not deal with the real issues and problems of the poor, their hardships, deprivation, exploitation and poverty.

In most primers, the village community is shown as a harmonious one, with no strife and rivalry.

"The conflicts, the perpetual exploitation by one class or caste of another are not even mentioned. Government plans and programmes are shown as functioning smoothly and faultlessly. Every government servant is shown to be serving the people with total honesty and dedication. Such depictions hardly reflect the realities of life in rural and urban areas". (Bhasin, 1985).

What is propagated is the dominant ideology of maintaining the status quo. An overview of literacy programmes carried out in various developing countries shows that the curricula in no way question the existing system.

> *"A realistic curriculum for adult literacy cannot be developed without acknowledging the presence of deep-rooted injustice and conflicts in rural society ... The curricula taught in the literacy classes do not relate to the life of the learners. What they reflect is an artificial fantasy world which proclaims the success of the prevailing order". (Krishna Kumar, 1982)."*

Analyses of literacy/post-literacy materials in countries in Asia and the Pacific have shown that the contents of the materials consist, in the main, of matters related to the stereotype of the traditional role of women in society. The contents cover areas such as housework, child care, family planning, and crafts and skills traditionally related to women e.g., weaving, embroidery, and flower making. Bhasin (1985), for example, has found that of the seven literacy primers for women she analyzed, all deal with subjects that are traditionally considered those within the women's realm.

The qualities that are prescribed for women are the age- old ones of sacrifice, self-abnegation, living for others, docility, shyness, and servility to men. Widespread male domination, the double burden of work women bear, the different kinds of discrimination practised against women etc. were not even mentioned, let alone challenged.

In recent years a new type of activity, the income-generating activity, has emerged as a necessary stimulus for literacy projects. The rationale is that in conditions of poverty, literacy per se is not an attractive enough proposition for women. An income-generating activity, on the other hand, is presumed to provide the necessary motivation for women to come to the adult education centre.

Leaners in Rajataphan Slum, Bangkok, cooked eggrolls for sale in a Unesco supported literacy/income generation project.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

But the income-generating activities most commonly pursued are sewing, tailoring, embroidery and similar 'feminine' activities. Other activities that are merely extensions of the work women do at home are match-box making, envelope, soap, and paper-bag making, pickle-making, among others.

The common characteristic of these income-generating activities, however, is that they are mainly fragmented activities with no efforts made to enable women to exercise greater control over their planning, operationalization and management. Nor are

Sewing is one of the most popular income generating activities in most programmes for women's education. Shown here is a sewing class in Bangladesh.

Unesco/John Beynon

these projects accompanied by discussions that would enable women to question the gender-based division of labour in society that is responsible for women pursuing only certain types of occupations.

Civic education for women in the region still varies greatly in terms of overall impact. Despite the advance of the new, more pragmatic civic awareness programmes where social change and daily realities are covered, there are still countries in the region where the content of women's education is changing only very slowly and where women's education is very limited.

STRATEGIES FOR CIVIC EDUCATION FOR WOMEN IN THE REGION

While greater functionality and realism in the educational content is becoming visible, a thorough and honest critical analysis of designs and strategies in women's civic education is essential to provide for systematic improvements in the programmes.

The empowerment process of women via education must deal with the multiple handicaps as indicated before, as well as with the social contexts that create them, and the roles the women will have to play in their micro- and macro- social contexts.

In operational terms, this implies a kind of education which enables women to think critically, to question, to analyze their own conditions, to acquire the information and skills necessary to alter it, and above all, to visualize the kind of society which they wish to bring about (Batliwala and Ramachandran, 1987).

Achieving empowerment for women through education calls for changes in the styles of policy making and planning as well as multi-dimensional overall strategies incorporated in policies and plans. The main fossil of such overall strategies should include the following:

Community Participation:

To change social attitudes, strategies will have to focus specifically on mobilizing the community to promote the education of girls and women. Awareness building programmes, through voluntary agencies, research institutions and artist groups, aiming for a new self-image of women would be an important first step towards participation of women in education. Programmes which aim for mobilization and participation of the community will have to be integral parts of the education department's activities. Women's organizations, informal women's groups and agents at the grass-roots level should support activities like:

- door to door awareness building;
- management and monitoring of non-formal and out-of-school programmes for out-of-school girls;
- providing orientation to women's groups and local social agencies;
- providing the local community with the means to plan, implement and monitor programmes for girls and women;
- encouraging the community to establish early childhood education centres so that school-going girls can be released from child care responsibilities and other household chores.

Universalization of elementary education for girls:

Access, enrolment and retention of girls in primary education is critical for improving the literacy rate among women in this region. Socio-cultural factors hinder the enrolment and attendance of rural girls from age eight onwards because they are engaged in minding their younger siblings, household work and

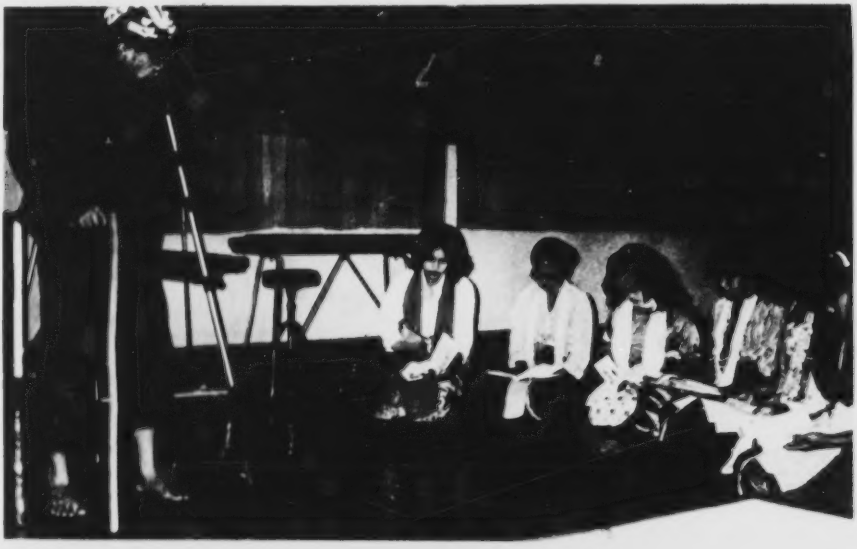
participation in parents' income generating activities. Besides, child marriages of girls are still common in the rural and tribal areas of some of the countries in the region. The greatest constraint in universalization of primary education for girls is their parents' poverty. Strategies will have to be formulated to improve the outreach and location of schools and to provide complementary non-formal, part-time primary education programmes for girls on a large scale. This would involve:

- extensive survey and school mapping exercises to identify critical areas with low enrolment, select locations within easy walking distance and establish norms for the provision of basic facilities;
- identifying target groups, their specific educational needs and resources available in the community for educational programmes;
- organizing part-time, non-formal educational programmes suited to out-of-school girls in primary schools (after school), public buildings or in homes;
- developing special curricula and materials;
- providing specific incentives e.g. tuition, books, uniforms etc.;
- developing special training courses for local women of local primary school teachers for running non-formal education centres;
- providing linkages with formal institutions;
- organizing mobile education centres using local women or primary school teachers who can accompany migrant groups, construction workers, etc.

Developing teaching personnel

Due to social and cultural attitudes prevalent in this region, it is imperative to train a large number of women teachers to take up educational programmes for women in both formal and non-formal streams. The problem cannot be solved by importing women teachers from the cities to the rural areas. Imported teachers seem to face problems adapting to the community in which they teach. Their turnover rate may be too high to be cost-effective. They may also have difficulties being accepted by the community. Local talents have to be identified and developed in order to solve the question of women teachers for primary education for girls and for adult education for women. However, as educated women are not sufficiently available in rural and inaccessible areas, girls with educational qualifications up to Grade VII or VIII may be recruited and given intensive training. Governments should provide them with stipends, free text books and uniforms until they finish their training:

- college-bound girls and other educated women in the community/mohallah should be motivated and trained to set up literacy centres in their homes;
- a large number of condensed courses for adult women at the primary, middle and secondary stages needs to be developed in order to promote women teachers in the rural areas;
- existing recruitment procedures should be revised to provide for re-entry of women teachers to the teaching services if for some reason they had left earlier, and for relaxation of age limits for entry into Government service.



Women literacy workers in Indonesia in a training workshop which used drama to present different teaching/learning methods.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

The Experimental Project to Train Women to teach both Children and Adults, in Ha Tuyen Province, relaxed entry requirements to enable local ethnic trainees to participate. A project supported by Unesco.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

Integrated planning and implementation of the Basic Needs' Programme:

An important strategy for increasing participation of women in educational programmes is to integrate programmes which provide support to various economic and social activities of women. Mass poverty, search for water, fuel and fodder, malnutrition and ill-health are factors which hinder the participation of girls and women in educational programmes. For their increased participation, a holistic planning approach of programmes of basic needs will have to be developed. Thus it is desirable to achieve overall coordination of the Departments of Health, Environment, Welfare, Water-supply and Education at the local level. This would mean an integration of policies in those sectors, co-ordination of delivery mechanisms and pooling of financial allocations. Such co-ordination calls

for an integrated approach in planning and development of programmes at state, district and local levels.

Spatial and decentralized planning:

Holistic need-based planning and implementation of programmes of education and basic needs for women calls for decentralization of the planning process. Detailed needs surveys, community profiles based on relevant socio-economic data, and spatial planning have to be introduced at the local level. Village Education Committees should be set up to prepare annual plans for educational development. These plans should be consolidated at the block/district level. Adequate financial and procedural flexibility should be worked out at the district level in order to achieve a combined development strategy for health, education, water supply and the environment.

Continuing education:

Investment in education for women is unproductive if large scale post literacy and continuing programmes for school leavers and neo-literate women are not started simultaneously. Continuing education is necessary for the retention of literacy skills and application of this learning for self improvement. It is an essential pre-requisite for creating a learning society. From a practical point of view, to harness the resources available at the village level, it would be desirable to locate the continuing education centre at the village level. Roughly, a centre may serve a population group of 5,000. The continuing education centre would have multi-purpose resources like a library, a reading room, cultural activities, a community TV centre, sports and recreation equipment. It would also have a mobile library unit and a local part-time worker who can take books to the neo-literates in the area.

In addition, there would be a need to promote vocational and technical training for women by co-ordinating programmes of development departments and industries.

International Co-operation:

Regional co-operation and collaboration in the development of policies and plans for community mobilization, enrolment and retention of girls in primary education and women in literacy programmes should be strengthened. In this context, Unesco has a catalytic and supportive role to formulate, implement and evaluate educational programmes through inter-country collaboration, exchange and sharing of experiences.

Income-generating projects

Income-generating projects need careful planning. A number of essential questions need to be asked and answered before embarking on any such scheme. Some of the more critical issues include the problem of raw materials (ensuring adequate quantities, their regular supply); the marketability of goods and services provided (availability of local markets vs. outside markets); and the problem of obtaining credit and loans. Lack of training in business is another problem common to income generating projects, as is the lack of suitable vocational training programmes. Rural women often cannot avail themselves of a new service scheme or technology because they do not have the time to be away from their subsistence activities.

Rural women in Indonesia applied the knowledge gained from the Paket A Learning Group in making "home cake".

Directorate General of Non-formal Education, Youth and Sports

The planning of training activities has to take into account time constraints as well as socio-cultural factors. Women in certain traditional societies are attracted to the centres for spiritual, artistic and aesthetic reasons. Interviews with women participants of the Unesco supported Integrated Pilot Project in Functional Literacy and Civic Awareness for Women in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India, for example, indicated that a good number of the participants enjoyed regular participation in the Project because they had an opportunity to learn to read religious literature such as the *Ramayana* and *Maha Bharata*.

One of the most crucial problems for small programmes is reliance on external agencies for their continuance. It is, therefore, imperative that the implementing agency assess the extent to which the project can expect to become self-reliant. Too often, implementing agencies have a social welfare attitude towards women's groups that encourages dependence rather than economic self-reliance.

An analysis of initiatives in rural development in some African and Asian countries confirm that development processes seem to marginalize the rural poor, particularly the women. A number of programmes have failed mainly because they were not located in the proper socio-economic milieu and because women themselves were not involved in decision-making. Factors that were identified in the success of many of the initiatives, by contrast, were:

> "... women's access to and control over the productive resources: land, labour, capital, technology, marketing; control by women over the product of their labour; the development or strengthening of an organizational base among disadvantaged women and sympathetic attitudes by the community, including husbands, and/or other external forces, such as the Government, or at least some individuals within them. (Gayfer, 1986)"

Organization

The most effective way to overcome women's marginalized and powerless status, is through organization.

As Gayfer (1986) points out,

> "Effective participation - the freedom to organize - is the key to rural development. Without organization, poor rural women will not get their rightful share of the productive resources or participate in the decisions that affect their lives".

Development and training of cadres/catalysts is another important lesson from the field, for these people play a critical role in sustaining new initiatives. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and other intermediaries have to be strengthened as they are often better equipped than governments to play a more dynamic role. But more importantly, *the struggle for equality is not a struggle between men and women, but a larger struggle against the existing socio-political structures that perpetuate inequalities.*

A discussion group led by a woman on forest conversation in a village outside Pune, Maharashtra, India.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

The Need for a New Consciousness among Women

A necessary prerequisite for initiating an adult education programme for women is an analysis of the structure of poverty and exploitation which prevents a large percentage of women from not only being literate, but also from being treated as equals.

There are also other critical questions that have to be asked. These relate to removing male domination and patriarchy and whether the adult education

programme for women leads to the domestication of women or attempts to liberate or empower them.

It is now becoming increasingly clear that in conditions of poverty, deprivation and powerlessness, a critical strategy should be to enable women to come together around issues and problems that affect them most, so that they can raise their critical consciousness through a process of dialogue and discussion. As women begin to open up, they gradually begin to develop self-confidence and a sense of personhood. Their critical consciousness develops as they begin to analyse the reasons for the common problems they face and consider the possible alternatives that can solve some of these problems, realizing that it is only through collective action that change in their existing condition can be brought about.

Many existing educational programmes do not provide women with the tools to understand and analyze the true nature of the social, political and economic systems that govern their lives and oppress them. This cannot be achieved only by their learning the 3Rs or by being drilled in one or more of the aspects of life, health, nutrition and civic education. If women have to become agents of change as well as active participants in the development process, the education offered to them must be a tool for consciousness-raising and action.

Continuously revisable planning

In the light of the experience and the lessons learned thus far, it is necessary to examine critically the strategies used for planning and implementing projects that have been in operation. An important lesson learnt in planning is that 'blueprints' for programme implementation worked out by external planners seldom work because there is no scope for 'revisability' on the basis of field experiences. Furthermore, planning is always done "on behalf of those who live in the situation which is sought to be changed, by persons living outside that reality; planning rarely draws its 'target group' into the process. Consequently, the plans tend to ignore key factors which often make or break programmes." (Batliwala & Ramachandran, 1987)

Another typical characteristic of planning is the tremendous preoccupation with quantitative inputs and targets at the cost of qualitative change. As already mentioned plans are generally made to cover long spans of time without any in-built mechanism for corrective measures and for changing direction when necessary. This means that the project will need to set up mechanisms for a "continuous planning-evaluation-revision-planning cycle". Rather than rigid, time-phased, target-oriented planning, there must be scope for continuous revisability in the programme. Thus viewed, planning does not remain a separate or special activity. Rather, it means breaking the defined categories of implementation so that one overlaps with the other and modifies it.

A need for more innovative materials and delivery methods

Training is another area to which very special attention needs to be paid. The training programme itself must occur in an 'environment of learning' in which the hierarchical relations between the trainers and the trainees are broken down and there is room for the trainees to control and determine the contents and the structures of the training programme. If the training methodology is participatory, it exposes the adult education functionaries to participatory norms in action, and

Inculcation of science through hands-on experimentation among rural villagers in Maharashtra, India.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

Participation by learners in learning about conversation of the forest through a boardgame. A Unesco-supported workshop on science materials for women.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

A traditional literacy class in Haryana, India.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

they are then more likely to impart these values and practices to the adults with whom they are interacting.

In the very first phase of training, functionaries of various levels need to come together in order to avoid workers from the same level being trained in isolation from others. It is crucial for training to be vertically rather than horizontally integrated because it helps to break down hierarchical relationships, promote mutual understanding, cooperation and support, and foster team spirit. Experiences of a number of projects have shown that any training programme that encourages living and eating together, irrespective of rank and status of the functionaries, and promotes sharing and learning from one another, generates a tremendous feeling of solidarity among the functionaries, which is an essential basis of any adult education programme.

Traditionally, training content has tended to emphasize cognitive skills at the cost of other skills. It is now increasingly recognized that there has to be an attempt to impart a new set of attitudes, values and behavioural patterns, besides developing various kinds of communication skills. This is particularly true in the case of imparting/generating civic awareness.

Raising civic awareness among women involves introducing new or changing previously held attitudes. Education for this purpose requires, therefore, emphasis on materials and methods which trigger some kind of attitudinal changes in addition to merely presenting facts and figures.

The report entitled *Civic Education in Five Unesco Member States* puts forth the following:

> If the teaching of civics is to serve its purpose at all, the working methods used must be interesting, variable and dynamic. Working methods such as discussions during a particular period and visits to various communal institutions have been recommended.

Materials in which a position or an issue is raised in the form of a discussion between two or three people may be effective. Through such discussions, different views, often conflicting views, are expressed, and challenged. Through the course of the discussion, a conflict may be solved. This encourages the target group to see the issue globally rather than from a single perspective. Seeing an issue from a different number of perspectives is a method that is likely to encourage attitudinal change faster than simply presenting the fact or the "right" way to feel. An example of this is presented in a Thai comic entitled *They Say Women Don't Work*, where the author presents a visitor in conflict with a local farmer. In their discussion, readers are taken through a series of arguments on the topic of whether the work that women do in and around their home is real work and whether it has any value at all. In the end, it emerges that, indeed, women's work in the home is, or should be, greatly valued. Having two men argue over the issue of the value of women's work was pervasive not only to women's readers but to men readers, as well.

For training to bring about attitudinal changes, it would have to be process-oriented, so that analysis and reflection receive the central focus. Periodic reflection, review exercises, and monitoring exercises are necessary to ensure that the new set of values and attitudes that are sought by the training programme are continuously reinforced and strengthened.

From the pages of the comic, They Say Women Don't Work. The value of women's work is discussed.

Thailand's Department of Non-Formal Education Ministry of Education

It is not essential if and when women start coming to the adult education centres to force literacy on them; neither should it become a condition for their participation. In fact, experience has shown that a good proportion of women who come to these centres are attracted to the centres because of other reasons, e.g., a chance to be together with other women, a chance to use a sewing machine or to listen to some mythological dramas. Eventually, however, the women may, through exposure, themselves come to the realization that they would like to have literacy skills like the other women who frequent the centres.

Experience also indicates, however, that the teaching of literacy skills cannot be postponed indefinitely. What this means is :

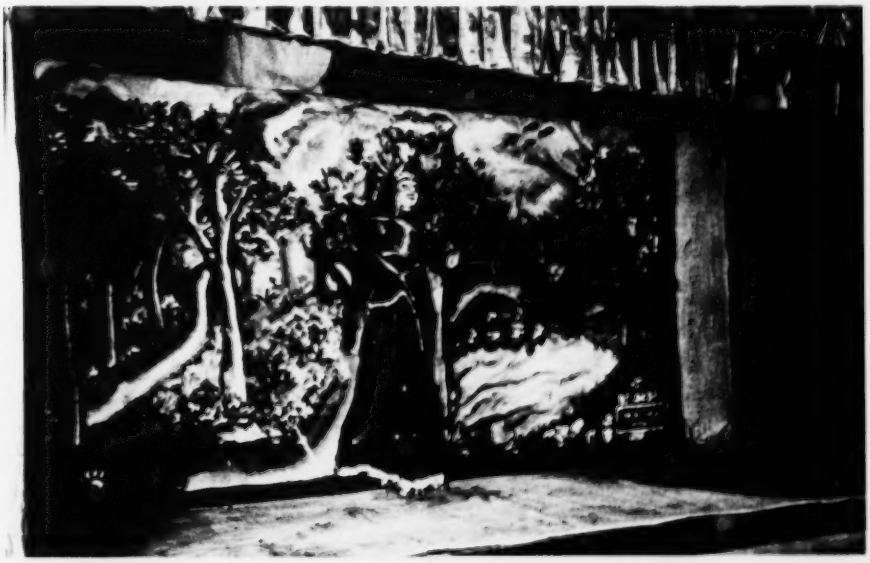
> "... women will always seek literacy themselves, at a point when its meaning and value become evident to them. So there needs be no anxiety that such a programme will end up doing all else except making women literate. They must and will become so, in a much more permanent way, if they are allowed to seek it at their own time and pace" (Batliwala and Ramachandran 1987).

At the 1987 "Inter-country Writing Workshop on Post- literacy Materials on Civic Awareness" organized for women, a common concern was voiced among all participants -- the need for innovative methods and materials in civic education.

Samples of low-cost literacy materials developed a Unesco supported workshop in Sarawak, Malaysia. This type of materials emphasises simplicity, innovation of presentation and relevance to learners' interest.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

There is a greater need for innovative methods and materials in civic education. Already, there has been some move in this direction, particularly in Australia where the use of various kinds of media is optimized. In addition, attractive non-traditional modes of information presentation such as comic strips, board games and simulation games are also used. Furthermore, in countries where the folk media are popular, such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and India, civic awareness raising is often done through folk art, e.g., puppetry and traveling drama troops. These delivery methods are found to be very effective. The target population grasps the messages and their meaning more readily than if the messages were transmitted in a traditional prescriptive manner.



Traditional media such as pupperty and shadow puppets are effective means for motivational as well as instructional purposes.

Unesco/Namtip Aksornkool

Young girls participate in learning through a boardgame in Indonesia

Directorate General of Adult Education, Indonesia

Civic awareness issues can be encouraged by any materials that provoke discussion or are thought-provoking or create conflicts. Examples are role simulation, role playing, discussion, questions and answers, problem solving and games, among others.

Simulation games are generally considered an effective method of bringing about attitudinal changes as they immerse users in a real-life situation in which they need to make choices. Role simulation needs to be well conducted by an informed facilitator who can manage not only the game in process but also the de-briefing session which should follow each simulation activity. It is in the de-briefing session that participants make personal sense of the experience and emerge with a new understanding about themselves and/or with new attitudes to issues and situations.

In a report entitled *A Guide to Environmental Values Education*, inducing a psychological conflict in learners is discussed as one of the effective ways to bring about reflection, re-examination of positions and eventual attitudinal changes. If rural women could be confronted with an issue in such a way that it is psychologically uncomfortable for them, this discomfort can be used as a springboard to bring about a change in attitudes. Authors and designers of materials may need to shock the readers to bring about change. The change may take the form of personal growth or an altered, hopefully enhancing, self-concept. Confrontation, particularly through simulation exercises, however, needs to be handled with great care. The facilitators need to be well-trained professionals who are aware of the ways in which the materials can have different impacts on different users. The confrontation exercises might have the potential to be emotionally damaging.

Rather than 'talk down' to women and 'teach' them their rights and duties and inform them about development programmes and about other aspects of civic education, adult education must enable women to ask questions, seek answers, act and reflect on actions and raise new questions. This type of education starts with an investigation of women's socio-economic reality, followed by the perception of a need to struggle against injustices suffered by them in the home, the workplace and society.

It is only when women gradually become empowered and understand the importance of collective action that the attempts to create awareness among them of their rights and various government schemes will become meaningful. This awareness will then facilitate the development of an effective pressure group to ensure implementation.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The question of whether to introduce income-generating activities by way of a skills training programme to boost the adult education effort presents a dilemma. On the one hand, in conditions of abject poverty, it becomes necessary to enable women to increase their earning potential. On the other hand, experience has now shown that most income generating programmes remain marginal activities and do not become self-sustaining enterprises. It is imperative that the implementing agency assess the extent to which the income-generating activity can become a self-reliant one. But there is another aspect about women's work that needs to be taken into consideration. Even if the economic activity becomes viable, once the woman starts getting an income, she is compelled to continue, "often working late

into the night with inadequate lighting, because the income-generating work is in addition to her 'normal workload" (Bernard and Gayfer, 1983). Any skills training or income-generating activity as part of an adult education programme for women must also build an infrastructure that will facilitate poor women's and girls' participation in the education programme. Support services like child care, provision of clean drinking water, assured availability of fuel and fodder will lift the burden off some of their household responsibilities and enable women and girls to participate in some other productive work.

Generally, monitoring and evaluation receive less attention than other aspects of adult education programmes. In the past, whatever evaluation studies have been carried out have been more in the nature of an 'audit', the emphasis being on finding out whether the programme 'worked'. As a result, evaluation has been perceived by the functionaries to be a fault- finding exercise. Consequently, the findings are generally ignored. Also, the emphasis in evaluation has tended to be more on quantitative rather then qualitative aspects. Some of the important lessons learnt are summarized by Dighe and Jain (undated):

Evaluation

- should not come merely at the end of the programme but should become an integral part of all its aspects;
- should not be confined to the quantitative dimensions only. It should cover the qualitative aspects as well;
- should not be merely 'external', but should be undertaken by the functionaries and the community of learners as well, so that it does not constitute a 'threat' but becomes a positive learning experience for everybody;
- should not be a one-way process, but should have an element of 'feedback' built into it in order to make it useful.

Experience has shown that the participatory ethos is helpful in monitoring and evaluation as well. Monitoring and evaluation must be seen as complementary processes, their aim being to improve a programme. They must, therefore, become continuous processes built into every aspect of programme implementation. In operational terms, they become a system of self and collective accountability. Monitoring becomes a process of overseeing periodically the progress of the programme with a view to taking corrective measures so as to optimize the effectiveness of the programme. In participatory evaluation it is the functionaries themselves who begin to see the importance of evaluation in their every day work and so internalize the process and become conscious of its worth. Such an evaluation helps those involved in the programme to measure the results achieved against the goals they have set for themselves. When done collectively, this process becomes a process of shared reflection.

The important characteristics of such a system are:

Evaluation

- as a process of reflection means an honest stock taking by all those involved in order to ascertain what has been achieved and what has not been achieved and for what reasons;
- should emphasize quality rather than quantity per se, 'process' rather than on meeting 'targets';

- evaluation becomes a two-way process. Information does not merely flow from bottom to top, but in both directions. That is, 'feedback' for corrective action becomes possible.
- Such an evaluation entails minimizing hierarchical relationships and fostering respect for one another as part of a team.

Support systems for women's projects

Often, one loses sight of the important consideration that if any innovative pilot project is to survive, and especially if the project deals with the education of women and girls, a strong support system is necessary. Most projects for women tend to die a natural death because the larger system considers them "merely" women's projects and either does not understand their role, or is just plain unsympathetic towards them. It is the responsibility of the project planners and implementors to widen the base of social consent so that strong support mechanisms in terms of training, supervision, resource materials etc. get set up and are strengthened and a pilot project is nurtured and kept alive until it is able to survive on its own.

Finally, a programme that has 'participation' as its central focus requires a great deal more from everybody associated with it than any traditional, educational programme. It requires first of all that the kind of ethos that is promoted and encouraged has to be practised by all those involved -- "the relationships, the processes and the questioning which we hope will empower women must first be experienced within the programme itself" (Batliwala and Ramachandran, 1987). This means that initially a group of workers who share the new value base and understand the methodology have to provide leadership to ensure that the dominant socio-cultural forces do not destroy the programme.

To tackle the problems related to functional literacy and civic education for women, issues related to each problem were identified. The following activities may be considered to help alleviate these problems:

Problems/Issues	Proposed Activities	Agencies
I. Individual and family related		
1. Inadequate knowledge on materials relating to health and family life.	Curriculum/textbooks learning materials in formal and non-formal systems.	
a) Health	Understanding physiological, psychological make up of women.	
	Child care (immunization, oral relydration therapy etc.)	
	Nutrition	
b) Ignorance about family life, e.g. problems of early marriage	Spacing of childbirths, responsible parenthood, basic sex education and information about parenthood	
Over-work	Providing basic labour-saving devices; changes should be made in the attitudes regarding the division of work in the family	Mass media, curricula, concerned agencies and research institutes
Lack of health and sanitation facilities	Adequate provision of health and sanitation facilities in the rural areas	Health Dept., Municipalities, Local Self-Government Bodies
I) Illiteracy		
Lack of awareness about the importance of women's education/ literacy	Consciousness/awareness raising through information campaigns/propaganda and coverage of success stories	Mass media, formal and non-formal education departments, community and religious leaders
Lack of education facilities for girls as a result of which universalization of education is not achieved	Provision of adequate educational facilities including buildings, books, separate toilet facilities for girls, free lunch at school, literacy classes for women and girls.	Different departments/ Government agencies
Outdated and irrelevant curricula and inappropriate teaching methods, materials and	Modernizing and revamping curricula and plans for women's education Revision and development of departments	Non-formal and Formal Education Departments and other non-governmental and governmental agencies

Problems/Issues	Proposed Activities	Agencies
training	relevant to women's issues. Designing suitable participatory methods for training and retraining of functionaries at all levels.	
Women's roles as homemaker, wife, mother, child rearer and health provider, etc. dictated by traditions	Encouraging non-traditional roles of women e.g. as successful workers, bread winners, professionals, leaders, etc.	Mass media, Formal and Non-formal Education Departments
	Equal exposure of male and female members of the family to traditionally segregated activities	- do -
	Re-orienting/sensitizing national policy makers, planners and administrators by way of - meetings and seminars, etc. - use of multi-media materials and other mass-media forms - dialogues with women's groups	Formal and Non-formal Education Departments
Lack of confidence among women	Provision of training activities focusing on the following areas: - understanding one's self "Who am I?" and "What am I?" - awareness of own potential, strengths and weaknesses - managing oneself - articulation of needs - ability to raise questions related to women's own existing conditions	Department of Adult Education, Women's Organizations.
Abandonment of women, violence against women, physical abuse	Organized action by women's groups to fight some of these social evils. Multipronged strategies such as legal provisions to protect women from desertion/separation. Establishing homes for destitute women.	Curricula/learning materials, mass media, NGOs, Department, of Law, Women Organizations, Government agencies.
Lack of decision making power in families		

Problems/Issues	Proposed Activities	Agencies
Most societies have patriarchal systems, with most major decisions made by men/fathers etc.	Raising women's awareness of their equality as provided for by constitutions and laws, women should be given the right to choose their life partners, the number and spacing of their children, information about inheritance laws, etc.	Mass media, curricula/ learning materials, women's organizations.
II. Community level problems		
1. Socio-cultural and religious resistance to women's development		
Cultural values and societal attitudes and historical traditions that block women's emancipation	Provision of stimuli for questioning existing attitudes, values and beliefs. Provision of scientific facts and explanation about matters related to women's everyday life, in a comprehensible manner.	Non-governmental organizations, agencies responsible for materials development, women's organizations, etc.
Vested interest groups, political parties and religious organizations which prevent women's participation in development	Every political party must educate its cadres about the upliftment of women	Mass media, political parties and religious leaders
2. Lack of organization among women		
Lack of organized efforts among women regarding their own development	Organization of women e.g. advocacy groups, agricultural unions, factory workers and cooperatives through provision of training on leadership, skills training, co-operative education, trade union education, etc.	Mass Media, NGOs, Women's Organizations, Education Department, Adult Education, Law Department
Lack of support systems in women's development from governmental organizations	Creation of community councils composed of government and non-government officials, women's organizations and representatives from target beneficiaries	Local Governments, Developmental agencies, Community, NGOs, etc.
Inadequate involvement/ participation of women in community improvement projects/ programmes	Involvement in community affairs, including: - political activities e.g. ensuring membership in councils, exercising	Local Governments/ Local Councils, Development Department in Health, Environment Sanitation, etc.

Problems/Issues	Proposed Activities	Agencies
	the right to vote and getting elected. - Social education through creation of parents or women's committees for monitoring education of girls and women. - Health areas - Environmental sanitation e.g. refuse disposal and clean water	
III. Socio-political and cultural problems		
Lack of aware-- ness of laws, programmes, facilities for women.		
a. Non-availability of laws in simple language; apathy towards delayed justice; lack of self-confidence; societal opposition	The mass media should spread knowledge of laws and programmes in simple layman's language. Free legal aid should be provided to women. Assistance should be provided by NGOs. Laws made by different countries in the region should be widely publicized. Laws and programmes should be discussed in adult education programmes. NGO's, especially women's organizations, should be oriented about laws made to benefit women.	Mass media; NGOs; Women's Organizations; Education Department; Adult Education Department; Law Departments.
Exploitation		
Exploitation often results from women's ignorance of their rights, from the absence of laws specifically protecting women from exploitation, and because laws, where they do exist, are often not enforced.	Laws protecting women from exploitation should be enacted and enforced strictly. Incidences of exploitation should be given wide publicity through the mass media. Politicians should expel from their parties those who exploit women in all forms (economic, physical, etc.). Strong women's organizations should fight exploitation. Free legal aid should be given to women. Education regarding exploitation and its prevention should be publicized through the mass media and in educational curricula.	Law Departments, Political parties; mass media; NGOs; Women's Organizations.

Problems/Issues	Proposed Activities	Agencies
Distorted images of women		
Negative images of women projected by the media e.g. as sex objects	Images of women in the mass media need to be improved through: - conducting analyses of how women are projected in the mass media; - identifying ways and means of arousing the mass media to project a more positive image of women; - designing/developing of alternative media materials and projecting empowered images of women.	Research Organizations, Women's groups and mass media agencies
Lack of coordination among development agency programmes for women	Coordination at all levels is required. There should be integration of programmes/ projects for women's basic needs. Planning should be started at the grassroots level with women's participation. Women should be given training in civic organizations for coordinated planning and implementation.	Adult Education Department, Mass Media, Industry, Agriculture, Education & Finance Department, Family, Health Department, Environment, Social Welfare, Rural Development.
IV. Economic Problems		
1. Poverty		
a. Limited access to economic opportunity for women	Provision of livelihood, income generating opportunities for women through: - skills training and upgrading of existing skills, e.g. with cottage industries; - non-traditional skills development, e.g. high speed operations, modern farming techniques - business management - development of business and entrepreneurial skills - preparation of feasibility studies - product development - packaging - pricing - marketing	Law Department, Women's Welfare Department; Ministry of Rural Development Bank

Problems/Issues	Proposed Activities	Agencies
	- provision of capital assistance, credit facilities for self-employment/group enterprises	
b. Unequal pay for equal work	Legal provision must be made by Governments to ensure equal pay for women. Where such laws exist, they must be strictly enforced.	Law Departments; Women's Welfare Department, Ministry of Rural Development
c. Replacement by machines in work usually done by women	Women must be given training for operating such new machines	- do -
d. Destitute women	Governments should carry out legislation to give preference to destitute women in jobs	- do -

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